



Nevada Partnership for Homeless Youth
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Southern Nevada Homelessness
Continuum of Care Board
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Youth Homelessness in the United States

2.5 million children in the U.S. experienced at least one night of homelessness during 2013 (*National Center on Family Homelessness*)



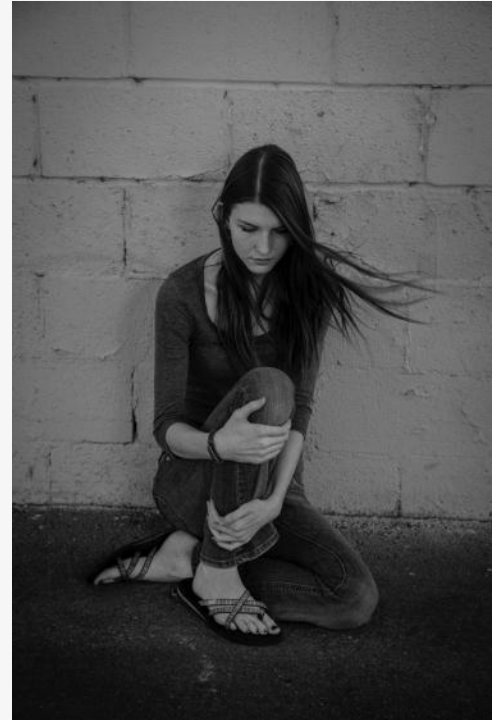
46,000 unaccompanied youth can be found living on the streets during any given night in the U.S. (*U.S. Department of Housing and Urban Development*)

Youth Homelessness in Nevada

23,790: homeless children in the state of Nevada in 2012 – 2013, a 13% increase over the prior year (*National Center on Family Homelessness*)

2,232: unaccompanied homeless children and youth living on the streets or in homeless shelters in Southern Nevada on an average day in 2015 (*2015 Southern Nevada Homeless Census & Survey*)

3rd: Clark County/Las Vegas' ranking for highest number of unaccompanied homeless children and youth in major metro area in the nation (*U.S. Department of Housing & Urban Development*)



Causes & Consequences of Youth Homelessness

Causes

- severe family breakdown
- running away from abuse and neglect
 - being kicked out by their families
- falling through the cracks of the child welfare system
- deaths in the family that leave them with nowhere to turn
 - economic, social, cultural, and a combination of these and other factors

Consequences

- substance abuse
- chronic mental and physical health problems
- unwanted pregnancy
- crime
- victimization
- gang involvement
- dropping out of high school
- becoming homeless adults

Youth homelessness is different from adult homelessness because young people...

- Are physically, emotionally, psychologically, and socially still developing
- Enter into homelessness with little or no work experience
- Are often forced into leaving their education prior to completion as a result of their homelessness
- Experience high levels of criminal victimization, including sexual exploitation and labor trafficking
- Often enter into homelessness without life skills, such as cooking, money management, housekeeping, and job searching



-National Network for Youth, “What Works To End Youth Homelessness?” (2015)

“Youth...benefit from focused attention by systems adapted to their unique needs”
– USICH, *Opening Doors*

Different for every community, but basic building blocks of an effective safety net for runaway and homeless youth include:

- Prevention & Outreach to Connect Youth to Services
- Drop-In Centers to Engage Youth & Link to Community Resources
- Shelter to Provide an Important First Step off the Street
 - Family Engagement & Interventions When Safe & Appropriate



Basic Building Blocks, continued



- Youth-Appropriate Housing Programs to Build Independent Living Skills
 - Case Management to Improve Wellness and Decision-Making
- Connection to Education to Increase Future Income Earning Capability
- Workforce Development to Enable Youth to Compete in the Job Market
 - Culturally Competent Services
 - Services that Respond to Survivors of Human Trafficking

Return on Investment

Evidence shows that best practice homeless youth programs create a significant return on investment for communities by:

Reducing

- incarceration rates
- chronic adult homelessness
- chronic physical and mental illness
- substance abuse
- crime
- unemployment



Creating

- productive, healthy adults
- who contribute positively to society

Comparative ROI



Homeless youth programs are *cost effective alternatives* to treatment facilities, group homes, foster care, juvenile corrections, custodial care, treatment, and/or arrests.

The average cost of serving a youth in a transitional living project is \$8,810—*less than half the minimum cost of serving youth through the child welfare or juvenile justice systems* with average annual costs ranging from \$25,000 - \$55,000 per youth.

– *National Partnership to End Youth Homelessness*

Policy Priorities

Our biggest challenges are lack of *awareness* and lack of *resources*

Awareness Challenges

- Children & youth experiencing homelessness are often invisible to both the public and policymakers
 - many not yet voters, not significant taxpayers
 - often fall through cracks of adult system: many don't know the unique circumstances and challenges of youth homelessness

Awareness Solutions

- Spread the word: educate public & policymakers about youth homelessness
 - Include youth explicitly as a special population in local, regional, and federal plans to end homelessness
 - Improve awareness through other systems, such as child welfare, mental health, and juvenile justice institutions, to improve discharge planning and prevention
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Policy Priorities, continued

Resources Challenges

- Less than 4,200 beds exist nationally dedicated to homeless youth, available to serve less than 10% of homeless youth identified nationally during HUD's latest point-in-time count (46,000)
- Federal government currently designates \$114 million for shelter, housing, and services for homeless youth – not nearly enough for extent of the problem

Resources Solutions

- Creative collaborations necessary between all levels of government, non-profits, and private sector
 - We must expand the safety net for homeless youth: increase youth-appropriate housing & services, education & employment support, prevention & early intervention, access to health care & affordable housing, targeted outreach, easier access to services for youth; must also gather better data
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Many homeless youth teeter on the edge between a lifetime of poverty, abuse, and crime, and a successful, sustainable future.




Evidence-based interventions can make all the difference, turning individual lives around while saving society millions in future costs.

Questions?



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Thank you!

